

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

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Spratt Votes to Restore Highway Funds; \$65 Million Would Go to South Carolina

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) joined a majority of his House colleagues on May 14 to pass H.R. 3694, the Highway Funding Restoration Act.

“The President’s budget slashed \$8.6 billion from highway funds, denying South Carolina \$111 million in road-building and repair money,” said Spratt. “This bill restores \$4.4 billion of that money, which means that our state will get \$65 million more for road construction and repair than the President’s budget provides.”

According to Spratt, the amount of money available for highway programs is fixed by a formula relating highway funding to gas tax receipts collected by the federal government. Two years ago, when the economy was strong, gas tax collections were high, and \$31.8 billion was available for highway construction. Because of last year’s recession, gas tax collections fell, and the formula provided only \$23.2 billion for highways in Fiscal Year 2003.

H.R. 3694, the bill Spratt supported, ensures that at least \$27.6 billion will be available for highways in Fiscal Year 2003.

Spratt is the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee and tried to increase highway funding in the budget by \$5.7 billion, or by \$1.3 billion more than the increase of \$4.4 billion provided by H.R. 3694.

“I am pleased to see the House pass H.R. 3694,” said Spratt, “but I would like to see us do more. The economy needs road-building and repair money in the short-term as a stimulus and in the long-run for economic growth.

“Few states need road money more than South Carolina. The President’s budget cuts would have been devastating to us, and I am pleased that to see us dodge that bullet. But I wish this bill did more.”

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